



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan attends Friday prayers at Al Fadi Ibn Abbas Mosque in Amman. Following the prayer, Prince Hassan toured the markets where he met with citizens, inspected their conditions and listened to their requests and comments. The Prince stressed the need for the local councils and administrations to coordinate with the Ministry of Awqaf to establish a link between sermons and religious lessons on the one hand and people's daily needs, conditions and social behaviours on the other.

Potential for cooperation with Islamic republics 'tremendous', says Jordanian team on return from their 5-state tour

By Ella Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordanian delegation, headed by Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'ed Ben Zeid, returned from a five-day tour of Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union this month, optimistic about future cooperation between these republics and Jordan in economic, technical, industrial and other fields.

Khaldoun Abu Hassan, member of the delegation who returned to Amman Feb. 20, told a Jordan Times Friday that the outcome of the visit was excellent and the ideas put to the leaders of the business communities in five countries were well received.

On the tour the delegation had the opportunity to talk to ministers, leaders of industrial and economic sectors and prominent individuals about various fields of cooperation, Mr. Abu Hassan said.

He added that the delegation outlined Jordan's achievements and explored fields of cooperation such as launching joint ventures.

Mr. Abu Hassan, who is the president of the Amman Chamber of Industry, said "we have invited officials and businessmen from the five countries to visit the kingdom and familiarise themselves with the achievements realised in industry, agriculture and other sectors; and the leaders of these countries have promised to visit Jordan possibly within the coming few months."

The idea of creating joint business councils in each of the Islamic countries to supervise economic activities with Jordan was eagerly welcomed because such councils, said Mr. Abu Hassan, would be in charge of organising trade and industrial exhibitions to promote the sale of national products.

"The five Islamic countries we visited are rich in minerals and agriculture, but their industry is now outdated and most of their economies are still linked with the Russian economy, although they are trying to disengage themselves from such linkage," Mr. Abu Hassan said. He added that of these, perhaps Uzbekistan has already succeeded in embarking on a market economy, while the others are striving hard to achieve that point.

The Jordanian delegation was careful to note that in view of its central geographical location in the Middle East, and in light of its developed business and service sectors, like finance, banking and insurance, the Kingdom is in a position to help and cooperate closely with the Islamic states, Mr. Abu Hassan said.

"Although the emphasis was on cooperation with the Islamic countries, we also had talks with leaders in Russia on such matters as cooperating in banking and business in general; but the political situation is not yet clear as the country is struggling to adopt a market economy," Mr. Abu Hassan explained.

The delegation visited Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, and documents for the establishment of diplomatic relations with Jordan were signed in each republic.

According to Mr. Abu Hassan, the leaders of these five countries appreciate the role and the policies of His Majesty King Hussein and regard with deep respect the moderate policies of the Kingdom and its role in religious affairs.

King Hussein met the Jordanian delegation at the Royal Court Thursday in the presence of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Chief of the Royal Court Khaleel Al Karaki and Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber to discuss the outcome of the tour.

The King praised the delegation's effort, describing it as opening a new path for cooperation with the Islamic republics.

Urging the delegation and the government to pursue bridges of understanding and confidence with the Islamic republics, King Hussein said scopes of cooperation are numerous and Jordan ought to help the new republics establish their Islamic cultural identity.

He called on the government to form follow-up teams to achieve that goal.

The delegation members all described their visits as extremely successful, noting that potential for cooperation in many fields is tremendous.

3 suspects held in Jabal Amman attack

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Police have announced the arrest of three suspects in at least three attacks on shops in Amman this month.

It was not known whether the three were also suspected of involvement in a series of attacks in the capital and suburbs since mid-September, but it was believed that the arrests could prove to be a major breakthrough in the investigations.

Brigadier-General Abdullah Hababbeh, chief of police in Amman, said Thursday the arrests came after an attempted robbery of a supermarket in the First Circle area of Jabal Amman Monday evening.

The owner of the store, Mohammad Mashaal, was stabbed in the neck by one assailant when he was grappling with another, but the injury was not serious.

Brig. Hababbeh, in an interview with Jordan Television, did not reveal the identity of the suspects, but said they had confessed to three attacks: A Feb. 15 robbery at a Jabal Amman pharmacy in which they netted JD 110, a Feb. 17 robbery at an Umm Uthaina bookstore in which they got JD 12 and Monday's failed attempt at Mashaal supermarket.

No violence except threats with a weapon was involved in the first two incidents, sources said.

The suspects, described only as "Arab nationals," fled the scene after Monday's aborted supermarket robbery, and police mounted an unprecedented manhunt in the area which lasted more than 36 hours.

Sources said two of the three were detained after a raid in a house in an area popularly known as "Egyptians' street" in Jabal Amman, and the third was arrested in light of information provided by the two.

According to the police statement, the suspects have criminal records.

There was no immediate indication whether the three were suspects in any other crimes, particularly the series of ill-famous attacks since mid-September.

But the pointed absence of any reference to these incidents in the police statement suggested that the authorities were opting to continue secret investigations.

"Police are hoping that interrogation of the three would yield information on the earlier attacks," said one source.

At least nine attacks with common features of physical assault have occurred since Sept. 13. At least two victims died and others suffered serious injuries.

The last attack was two weeks ago, at a bookshop in the Tabor-bour area of northeast Amman.

Early reports said police investigations had found that a blunt instrument — most probably a medium-sized hammer — was used in most attacks, and hence the assailant(s) was nicknamed by the media as "Abu Shakoush (hammerman)."

In an interview with Jordan Television last week, Major-General Fadel Ali Fheid revealed that a hammer was used only in one of the attacks and that forensic tests indicated that other "domestic and professional tools" were used in the other attacks.

Despite the otherwise common features in the incidents, the police chief said, the term "Abu Shakoush" was totally unfounded. He criticised the media for "sensationalising" the news and creating panic among the public.

Gen. Fheid said police were dutybound to maintain silence on criminal investigations until definite facts were established and suspects were arrested, since any immature disclosures could hamper their work and negatively affect the success of their efforts.

In his public comments, Gen. Fheid has repeatedly reminded the Jordanian public that the Kingdom's security forces have a record of solving some of most difficult cases.

"It is only a matter of time before the so-called 'Abu Shakoush' or 'Abu Mismar' (mailman) cases would be solved," he commented, taking a jab at the media for their handling of the issue.

In the meantime, the police chief advised the public not to panic, but be cautious.

Jordanian depositors reject 35% offer from BCCI owners in Abu Dhabi

Committee demands full payment of said \$235m involved

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian depositors with the collapsed Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) in London have rejected an offer by the bank's owners in Abu Dhabi to pay them 35 per cent of their deposits and are now seeking to enlist international support for their bid to secure full payment.

Sources close to the depositors said the offer of a 35 per cent payoff in full settlement of the deposits was not realistic and argued that the owners of the bank, which was sequestered by European monetary authorities in July 1991, were capable of paying in full.

According to the sources, the total amount involved is around \$235 million, the bulk of them in accounts with BCCI branches in London.

One of the sources said that more than half of the depositors were inclined to accept the partial payoff, but the rest were resisting, arguing that depositors in some of the European as well as Middle Eastern countries were paid in full by the owners — the family of Sheikh Zayed Sultan Al Nahayan, president of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and absolute ruler of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

"They (Jordanian depositors) are arguing that their counterparts in France, Spain and other European countries, Yemen and Oman in the Middle East and several countries in the Far East have been paid in full," said one of the sources.

"Their approach is also based on the argument that the ruling family of Abu Dhabi is wealthy enough to return all their deposits," the source added.

Other sources said those rejecting the offer represented only 10 per cent of the depositors.

"...There will not be any solution... except through the return in full of our deposits and rights registered with the bank," said an advertisement published in the local press by a committee of the depositors last week after a meeting with the representatives of the owners.

"We... declare that all proposed plans and methods used to conceal the truth will not make us give up our claims for our full rights," it said. "...the reasons

that prompted us to bank (with BCCI) were confidence and belief that the owners of the bank were honourable... wealthy... (and) responsible people who will not do us harm."

"What we hear and see, however, of the people responsible for the liquidation of the bank is so regretful and disgusting after our money was plundered through the latest and most modern means for money management in the financial capitals of the world," it added.

"We appeal to all the responsible governments and organisations to stand by us. We will not give in on our rights..." it pledged.

According to the sources, the announcement by the depositors came after European courts rejected their appeal for full payment of their deposits with BCCI, which is being liquidated by a tribunal appointed by the monetary authorities of Luxembourg, where the bank was based.

The multi-billion dollar collapse of BCCI came after several years of scandals implicating the bank in money-laundering operations and shortchanging governments and depositors. The U.S.

government has initiated a series of cases against former BCCI officials, including its founders.

Many depositors have already received up to \$15,000 under a deposit-guarantee scheme in force in London. But, according to the sources, many Jordanian depositors had hundreds of thousands in foreign currency held in individual accounts with BCCI London.

The dispute is independent of the operations that BCCI had in Jordan until July 1991, when the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) took over the bank simultaneously with a similar action by the Bank of England, the Luxembourg monetary authorities and others in Europe.

Depositors with BCCI Jordan did not lose any money since all foreign currency holdings of BCCI Jordan had been brought under the control of the CBJ several months before the takeover.

The BCCI branches, along with their commercial licences, were sold to a Jordanian institution, the Business Bank, which is now running them as Jordanian banks totally independent of any external affiliations.

AARDO sets up regional office in Amman

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Abdul Razzaq Tubeishat and Secretary General of the Afro-Asian Rural Development Organisation (AARDO), Ahmad Khalil Thursday signed an agreement organising the work of the AARDO's Amman-based regional office for the Middle East.

The agreement defines the duties and responsibilities of the office and the commitments of the ministry.

Under the agreement, Jordan can benefit from the AARDO's projects in the area of integrated rural development.

The regional office in Amman will make the necessary contacts with AARDO's headquarters to ensure the participation of Jordanians in training courses and seminars held by the organisation and its scholarship programme.

The organisation's Amman office will be headed by Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Secretary General Assem Ghosheh.

Jordan, Australia to build railways

CANBERRA (Petra) — Minister of Industry and Trade Abdullah Ensour, who is in Canberra to discuss promoting further economic and trade cooperation between Jordan and Australia, said the meetings thus far have brought about an agreement by both sides whereby Australia will participate in several infrastructure projects in Jordan and help the Kingdom to lay railways and construct sheep slaughter houses.

Dr. Ensour, who is heading the Jordanian team to the talks with their Australian counterparts, said Jordan was trying to benefit from Australia's experiments in processing dairy products and in the production of cereals, adding that Jordan proposed to the Australian team the idea of launching joint ventures.

According to the minister, the two sides agreed on a number of measures designed to promote trade. He said Australia promised to facilitate Jordan's import of Australian fresh meat.

Heading the Australian team, Minister of Foreign Trade Gareth Evans said trade between the two countries rose from \$6.2 million in 1990 to \$27.2 million in 1992. Jordan exports phosphate to Australia.

HUDD puts 342 units on the block

AMMAN (Petra) — Next month, the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) will distribute the housing units of the Batrawi Housing Estate in Zarqa governorate to low income groups, according to an announcement released Friday by Department Director Yousef Hiyasat.

The 342 new units are of various sizes and cost between JD 11,000 and JD 17,000 each.

Mr. Hiyasat explained that these housing units were originally built for government employees, but some will be sold to the public as well.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Crown Prince condoles Al Khreisha family
AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Friday delegated his advisor Mohammad Njadat to convey his condolences to Al Khreisha family over the death of Zeid Mohammad Al Khreisha.

New coins to be issued

AMMAN (Petra) — New coins will be put into circulation by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) as of Monday, March 1, 1992. The CBJ announced that the coins will be of the 10.5, and 2.5 piasters denominations, issued in accordance with the bank's 1992 system No. 28. The new coins will be used in the local market along with the old ones, the CBJ said. On one side of the coins will be a profile photo of His Majesty King Hussein, with the phrase "Al Hussein Ben Talal, the King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" written in Arabic. On the other side there will be the denomination written in Arabic and English, the year of issuance and the phrase "The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" in English.

JNRCS begins assistance distribution

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) has begun distributing in-kind assistance to needy families in various parts of the Kingdom. The assistance includes sugar, rice, flour, fat and clothing. The JNRCS recently distributed gifts, clothing and toys to children attending Al Amal School for the Deaf and Mute in Quwaismah.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

Exhibition of paintings by four Arab artists from the United States — Ghada Jamal, Helen Khal, Soha Nourst and Afaf Zurayk — at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Gallery in Jabal Amman, between the First and Second Circles (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.).

Exhibition of oil paintings by Iraqi artist Mohammad Fakher at Isaladna Art Gallery.

Exhibition of paintings by Iraqi artists Mohammad Fawzi and Maher Mejbai at Alia Art Gallery.

Ministry conducts feasibility studies on constructing two dams

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Water and Irrigation is conducting feasibility studies on the construction of two dams — one at Waleh and the other at Mujib south of Amman — which together would collect up to 20 million cubic metres (mcm) of rain water annually.

A spokesman for the ministry said tender documents have been ready since the studies have been completed in the coming months.

The ministry has already announced a tender for the construction of Al Tannour Dam in Wadi Al Hassan in southern Jordan. The proposed dam will have a capacity of 12 mcm.

He said a tender was recently announced to build a dam at Wadi Shueib in the central Jordan Valley to store up to three mcm of rain water.

Designs have been prepared for the three earth dams in the north centre and south of the country, the spokesman said, adding that these dams will be constructed similarly to the country's 12 other dams which were built in the badia regions and which have a total storage capacity of 20 mcm.

To meet the growing needs for water in the Irbid and Mafrq governorates, the ministry will soon announce tenders for the replacement of 600 kilometres of the old water network.

He said work on these projects is not expected to start before the first quarter of 1994.

CEDARE VACANCIES ANNOUNCEMENT

Programme Leaders: - Fresh Water Management - Land Resources Management

Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE) is an international, non-profit, autonomous institution established in Cairo, Egypt. Sponsored by UNDP, the Arab Fund and Egyptian Government and also by the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD, Rome), CEDARE is seeking highly qualified scientists for the positions of Programme Leader: Fresh Water Management and Land Resources Management respectively. The P.L. will direct an interdisciplinary team of support staff. She/he will supervise programmes and direct the logistical tasks covering the CEDARE bounds of Arab Region and Mediterranean Europe. She/he will prepare budgets, work plans and periodic reports. The Programmes: Deal with quantity and quality of resources, management of shared reserves, water conservation towards sustainable development and on land with rural and urban land use and conservation, as well as desertification towards sustainable development. Requirements: Candidates must have PhD either in Water or Land or a related subject, with substantial research/work experience, knowledge of water of land management preferably in CEDARE region and experience in interdisciplinary programmes. Proficiency in English is essential; working knowledge in Arabic or French desirable.

Closing date for receiving applications mid-March 1993. Emoluments: Salary and other benefits are comparable to those of International Organisations. Applications: CV, names, addresses, fax numbers of three references and copies of relevant supporting documents be sent to:

The Executive Director
CEDARE
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P.O.Box 52, Orman, Giza,
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تأسيساً على مبادئ حرية الصحافة مستقلة عن السلطة التنفيذية والسياسية

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
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Editorial and advertising offices:
Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 661242

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

Don't corner the Palestinians

THE DECISION made by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and his Russian counterpart Andre Kozirev to go ahead and extend invitations to the Arab and Israeli parties to attend the next round of peace talks in Washington in April suggests that Mr. Christopher's visit to the Middle East was, relatively speaking, successful.

The fact that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin did not endorse Mr. Christopher's proposals over the expulsion of 400 Palestinians to South Lebanon does not seem to taper American optimism over the participation of all the parties in the 10th round of the peace negotiations. This could be explained by the hypothesis that Mr. Rabin's reluctance to accept the new U.S. ideas on the Palestinian exiles may have been motivated by Israeli domestic considerations. Israel's Labour-led government obviously does not want to appear as having buckled under U.S. pressure over an issue that has caused it a lot of embarrassment.

The fact that Mr. Rabin and his government are telling their American allies that they are ready to concentrate on negotiating a deal with Syria suggests that the Israelis want to put more pressure on the Palestinians to accept whatever being offered by the Labour government and sanctioned by the U.S.

Should this Israeli tactic of a Camp-David-like accord with Syria materialise, it will push Palestinian radicalism to its limits and will be a prescription for a new era of conflict and chaos in the region. While Mr. Rabin's predecessor, Likud leader Yitzhak Shamir, intended to go on negotiating with the Palestinians for a decade while changing reality on the ground, Mr. Rabin seems to be intent on pursuing the same ends but with different means.

Nevertheless, should American efforts to bring all the parties back to the negotiating table bear fruit, the thrust of the U.S. "full involvement" should focus on advancing the process on all tracks, especially on the Palestinian-Israeli track where the core of the Arab-Israeli dispute lies. It has become a foregone conclusion that unless the Palestinian issue is resolved once and for ever, and for the satisfaction of the Palestinians' national aspirations, peace in the Middle East will not be attained. This is why Mr. Rabin and his government should work for an early return of the exiles and an easing of the harsh conditions that Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza are subjected to. Mr. Rabin himself needs to take the initiative and show goodwill and he will find the Palestinians ready to sit and talk peace.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I daily Friday criticised the United States continued drive to starve the Iraqi people and to condone Israel's atrocities in the occupied Arab lands. It said that dropping food to the people of Bosnia Herzegovina can by no means improve U.S. image because its policies are based on aggression and its history abounds with evidence about American forces making aggression acts against people in Asia, Africa and Latin America. While allowing the Israelis to kill Palestinians fighting for their freedom and maintaining sanctions on Iraqi women and children, the United States claims to be striving to attain peace in the Middle East and continues to invite the Arabs to the negotiating table, said the daily. With a deteriorating economy at home, the United States cannot be in a position to police the world justly and fairly, and with its aggressive attitude towards other nations, it is only bound to win the hatred of other nations, the paper said. The policies adopted by the successive U.S. administration do not reflect wisdom at all, neither do they show that those in power realise that their actions cannot help establish peace and stability in the world, the paper said. To succeed, the United States should not only care about its trade agreements with Japan and Europe, or direct its attention towards looting the oil wealth of the Arab countries, but rather, said the paper, it should recognise the rights of other nations to freedom and real peace and security. The paper said that the current siege on Iraq could cause suffering to the Iraqis but can by no means win the United States any glory.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily commented on the ongoing charity campaign spearheaded by Her Royal Highness Princess Basma. The charity campaign is aimed at raising funds to finance projects for the needy and to collect donations for the poor families of Jordan and there many, said Nazih. The writer said that those who are wealthy and able to extend a helping hand more than others are expected to give more, in line with the teachings of religion. This is a noble mission being implemented by the Queen Alia Fund and one that requires support and active backing by all Jordanians, especially during the month of Ramadan, said the writer. Indeed, it is up to the Jordanian people to see this campaign succeed because the Queen Alia Fund is only a coordinator and organiser of the campaign, arranging for the donations to reach the targeted needy people, continued the writer. He said that this campaign is a trust and a responsibility that should be shouldered by all those who are in a position to extend a helping hand to the needy in our community. Aiming to achieve a noble mission, this campaign relies squarely on the noble attitude and generosity of the Jordanian family, said the writer. He said that the campaign serves as a testing ground to determine the Jordanian society's readiness and capability to enhance social solidarity among their members.

The transitional politics of human rights

Following is an excerpt from an address delivered by Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka to the Association of Nigerian Authors at the end of 1992. Since the delivery of the address, Nigerian presidential elections were postponed until June this year.

THE NEWS is not notably encouraging. The news is, to be candid, a little disheartening. At the last gathering of writers on our own soil at which I was present — the International Conference on African Literature in May 1988 — I made a call to all African dictatorships to set a date, well before the end of this century, to terminate their existence and restore the right of self-determination to our people. I also called upon my fellow writers to utilise all their skills to bring about this desired socio-political condition for the African polity. Those summonses received a formal boost from the then president of the Organisation of African Unity, General Ibrahim Babangida, at the annual conference of that organisation in June 1991 in Abuja. It was a speech which was quite unprecedented in the gatherings of that mutual admiration club of African rulers.

We know that a democratic order is, by itself, no cast-iron guarantee for the application of fundamental human rights in any society. It is even becoming fashionable to say that it is futile to speak of human rights when people have yet to be assured of two square meals a day in a society that does not lack for resources. That latter statement, apart from its untruthfulness, suggests to me in a rather macabre way that society would be happier if victims of torture were well-nourished rather than skeletal. Or that it would be perfectly acceptable to lock people up in totally darkened cells for 180 days at a stretch — as was the practice in the old South Africa — as long as such prisoners are guaranteed three square meals a day. Let us quit this pointless game of comparative humanism. The ideal society is not achieved by belittling one right of the individual in order to promote another; all rights of society are not addressed within the same breath; and a division of labour is the strategy of social responsibility. And it is from within this holistic awareness that we also insist that, while democracy does not absolutely guarantee the ideal condition of fundamental human rights, it is a rational, time-tested foundation on which we can begin to erect a superstructure of those rights.

When I utter pessimistic sounds about progress within the democratic agenda since my exhortation of May 1988, I do, of course, acknowledge some progress on certain fronts, including even apartheid South Africa. Nevertheless, we cannot fail to note the continued desperation of resistance in a number of sister nations, including fraudulent cosmetic changes or propositions which make a mockery of our true destination. What is more — and this is what concerns us —

the seemingly or temporarily successful strategy of stalling the process, adopted by the obstinate few, serves to encourage backsliding motions even among those dictatorial regimes that have been compelled, by popular movements, to undertake a practical response to these demands.

Who, for instance, can dismiss outright the speculation that the successful instance of Burkina Faso has served as a model for the fraudulent conversion of power devised by Flight-Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings in order to rob the Ghanaian people yet again of their right to an authentic self-determination? In this contemptuous act of public deception undertaken by a power-hungry individual, we can only wish the Ghanaian people the necessary courage in putting a definitive check on this truly tiresome propensity of African leaders for self-perpetuation in power.

Can we doubt also that the machinations of Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, and Mr. Eyadéma's murderous manipulation of an ethnic-based army (in Togo) in the project of self-perpetuation do not feed on each other for sustenance? Again, we must express our solidarity with the Togolese masses in their contestation of the continued treachery of their armed minority. The weapon of mass strikes and the paralysis of state machinery is a weapon in which we must take more than neighbourly interest; we never know when it might be our turn to employ similar tactics. Let us not fail to parallel also Houphouët-Boigny's delusion of grandeur (in the Côte d'Ivoire) with Hastings Banda's own delusion of immortality (in Malawi), providing us the pathetic spectacle of two senile octogenarians clinging desperately to the cliff-edge of power on arthritic finger-tips. The prisons of Malawi only temporarily immerse the bodies of the propensities of freedom; their spirit is at liberty, and that spirit will shortly sweep Malawi into the widening democratic league that already embraces Zambia, the Republic of Congo, and Namibia, and has shaken the once impregnable ramparts of apartheid South Africa.

Delusions of grandeur, or power, are not, alas, confined to the aged and senile. Mr. Strasser of Sierra Leone is already exhibiting the banal symptoms. And on our home front (Nigeria) we have recently undergone a variety of assaults on our fragile democratic initiatives by individuals with uncommonly high levels self-regard. Where this delusion is most highly concentrated, what we have witnessed is a nearly single-handed subversion of the democratic machinery, the purchase of so-called power-brokers — in reality mere mobsters, enforcers and thugs — recruited through agents the length and breadth of the country; we have witnessed the purchase of returning officers, state legislators, local government party chairmen, traditional rulers and, yes, even elected governors, who then convert the machinery of state to the personal service of one individual, marching to the sweet



Wole Soyinka: While Democracy does not absolutely guarantee the ideal conditions of fundamental human rights, it is a rational, time-tested foundation on which we can begin to erect a superstructure of those rights.

naira notes from a muted martial bangle.

Our tools, as writers, are words, and if I appear to have stated the obvious, I shall extend this further by stating that, as users of words primarily, it is only natural that we are more responsive, perhaps even over-responsive, to the nuances or sub-texts of the choices of public expression than the ordinary individual. The foregoing is to situate why I was recently startled by the contrast provided by two public expressions of the same objective, and reminded that there has been a promotion of certain dangerous tendencies in governance which we have wrongly designated as trivial. While we may dismiss certain foibles related to the podium of power as mere aberrations that will disappear with the termination of a particular regime, we would be shirking our responsibility if, on discovering that we are being brainwashed into accepting such abnormalities as the norm, we do not immediately call attention to them. This is how traditions are established, even of the unsavoury kind. We dare not wait until our new democratic replacements and their appendages adopt what, in effect, are abuses of the government process. We have to let them know, now, that such conduct will not be tolerated. The time to place them on notice is now.

This nation is weary of arbitrary interventions in people's daily existence; it is ready for a civic revolt, even with all its own pitfalls, human failings and uncer-

tain prospects.

We must spend a little more time on the military caste — and its human accretions — from whose control we insist our destiny must be wrested. Nigerians forget easily. Or perhaps we should put it this way — the reaction of the average Nigerian to any challenging or unsettling event even suggests a failure to connect such an event to similar occurrences in the past, even as a homologue. Such recollection is bound to qualify, in a reasoned way, what would otherwise be a blind instinctual response to the immediate event. We know that we do recall events which provoked a similar hurt, a similar resentment, a similar state of rage, but, usually, only when the perpetrators of the new assault are the same as before, since this further propels us into the vengeful, emotive mode of response. This trait must be brought to the attention of the editorialists, the media commentators, those who should charge themselves against over-reaction. A reaction which further compounds one's injury surely ends up awarding victory to the aggressor.

Opera Wanyosi was written over 15 years ago. Those whose memory needs jogging should recall that play. It catalogues the atrocities committed on the Nigerian populace by the army. I recall that when it was first staged at the University of Ife at Convo-cation, a military governor who was a special guest was so outraged that he wanted to walk out and then institute action against

the university — and myself of course — for such a denigration of the army's image. As the play proceeded, however, according to his own testimony he began to ask himself questions, and he ended up admitting to himself that the play depicted the truth. He said, "I began to feel ashamed of my uniform."

I don't know if he was the one who took news of the performance to the then head of state, because that very head of state, General Olusegun Obasanjo, spoke to me about it in his usual memorable manner. He wanted us to give a command performance to which he would order his officers from all over the country, including the sergeant-majors. He felt it would do them a lot of good to be made to confront how they were perceived by other members of society. Then he added, "of course, you realise that after the show, I will lock all of you up, the writer, director, the actors, even the most junior stagehand."

It is a national tragedy, and a dark foreboding for our democratic future, that, 15 years after Opera Wanyosi, the army should not only abound and incorporate a number of policemen, but that a government spokesman should dare insult public intelligence by suggesting that the army had abducted a senior police officer and kept him away from his office and his family for 45 days "for his own safety". And anyone who believes that it was yet another coincidence that the inspector-general of police ordered his men back on the beat after the release of the senior police officer, must be an alien to this Nigerian soil, indeed to the entire African continent. There is no question, not one iota of doubt in my mind, that the police withdrew their men, either through indirectly transmitted, unofficial directives, or else permitted their men to remain off-duty in that same "deconstructed" style that the army spokesman employed, looking the other way while they stayed off duty until their kidnapped colleagues were released. What this means is that we, the public, were placed in double jeopardy by the failure of the army to discipline its men. And, of course, we, the public, must accept that we were also in part contributors to our own fate, since we failed to condemn the army's action.

The lesson that I wish to impress on everyone is the general loss to every section of the public. The mystique of esprit de corps, especially where one esprit de corps ranges itself against another, is costly, irrational and unpatriotic. While the two groups themselves suffer casualties in the process, it is the defenceless public which pays the dearest penalty. The recent kidnapping of the policemen shows clearly that the army has yet to purge itself of its tendency towards organised out-laws. By that kidnapping they assigned our fate to the hands of that no longer shadowy, third esprit de corps which they had taken for granted — that of organised violent crime. The army must be told that after the police killed one of theirs, they, the

army, then proceeded to create the circumstances for the gunning down of two more from their own ranks, plus an unknown number of civilians, the highest in any month that this country has ever known.

We, as writers, have a duty to remind the public, to which we belong, of our own culpability in authenticating one of two faces of a counterfeit coin. We must ensure that we are not sucked so easily into illusory triumphs which dislodge our real interests. It is time that the public developed and imposed on national consciousness a comprehensive esprit de corps, one that serves all sectors of the community, not one that excludes, or privileges, one sector at the expense of others.

And that same example must serve as our guide in the drive to take the military out of our political existence and ensure that they remain outside it, permanently. If we fail to absorb the lesson of the (recent past) in its fullness, we shall yet again fall into the trap of crowding over the self-destruction of our erstwhile presidential aspirants, and thereby reverse ourselves in our democratic undertaking. I have already heard the refrain in many unexpected quarters — let the army stay on, the civilians have proved that they have learnt nothing, the new breed is the old breed except in subtlety, Babangida should not go ... and so on ad infinitum. While rightly blaming the politicians for the recent electoral debacle, the same opinions obscure the fact that the entire transition programme was the work and the responsibility of the army in government. The duration, the parties, the constitution, the manifestoes, the changes upon changes and reverses of gear to various starting points, the decision on open balloting, the erstwhile parish moneybags translated into cash-tankers ... every detail and consequence, including even the existence of the telegraphic chairman of the NEC, all was the handiwork of this military régime. So how can the failure of such a multi-billion naira project — no expense spared — be used as a justification for prolonging the stay of the army?

What is at stake here is more than the credibility of the army as perceived by the public; it is also a question of future trust between the many interest groups which make up the nation, the army included. The army's incursion into our political fortunes has not been without its achievements, and a sense of decency, of fair dealing, demands that all such should be acknowledged. Indeed, I would go further and assert it as a fundamental right of the army in government that its attainments be objectively assessed and acknowledged. That, however, can only be after it has fulfilled its pledge to the nation in every particular, not as variable evidence of goodwill but of solemn patriotic duty. And on that note, I suggest that we leave them alone to prepare in orderly fashion the final leg of their farewell undertaking: Jan. 2, 1993 is, after all, only a very short haul away.

Uncertainty engulfs Quebec's future

By Deborah Charlies
Reuter

The resignation of Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney could add fuel to the separatist movement in Quebec as the French-speaking province loses a strong ally in Ottawa.

Mr. Mulroney, a bilingual Quebecer of Irish descent, has always had a unique relationship with Quebec despite being one of Canada's most unpopular leaders to date due in part to a controversial seven per cent value-added tax and double-digit unemployment.

Mr. Mulroney — who resigned as conservative leader on Wednesday — may not have been liked all the time, but he is a "son of Quebec" who worked hard to solve the differences between Quebec and the rest of Canada.

"Quebec loses an ally," headlined the editorial page of Quebec's Le Soleil newspaper on Thursday. Editorial page Editor Michel Audet credited Mr. Mulroney with "modifying the traditional political alliances in Quebec."

Mr. Mulroney forged a close relationship with liberal Quebec premier Robert Bourassa — one of the province's strongest supporters of Quebec's staying within Canada.

But the future is uncertain for Mr. Bourassa, who has been sidelined with a recurrence of cancer and who says he will make a decision on his political future after he sees how his body reacts to experimental cancer treatments.

Mr. Mulroney's resignation, coupled with Mr. Bourassa's illness and rumours that he too may step down, has added to the uncertainty of Quebec's future.

Claude Ryan, a senior Quebec minister and another staunch supporter of Quebec's staying within Canada, said the province has lost a "tremendous voice" with Mr. Mulroney's resignation, adding that federalism is in trouble in Quebec without a credible voice in Ottawa.

"Canadian federalism is in very difficult shape at the moment," Mr. Ryan told reporters. "How is it going to be handled in the future? I don't know. There is great instability."

The separatist, opposition Quebecois said it sees Mr. Mulroney's resignation as a boon to the federal pro-separatist bloc Quebecois.

For all but one of the last 25 years, Canada has been run by a bilingual Quebecer, and analysts have traditionally held that elections are won or lost in Quebec.

Most of the leading contenders to head up the Conservative Party are not from Quebec, a fact which could alter the relationship between the province — which asserts its rights as a distinct society with a different culture from that of English-speaking Canada — and the rest of the country.

Parti Quebecois leader Jacques Parizeau has already set out a long-term plan for the party that will lead to "sovereignty" — political separation with continued economic links — for Quebec by 1995.

Clinton: the politics of caution

BY Jim Wolf
Reuter

WASHINGTON — The planned U.S. aid drop over Bosnia marks a cautious foreign debut for President Bill Clinton, clearly eager to avoid escalation into a major entanglement abroad.

In announcing plans to drop relief supplies from high altitudes, the White House, took pains to describe it as a humanitarian mission that would benefit all sides in the Balkan conflict and not lead to deeper U.S. involvement there.

"These aid drops are being carried out strictly for humanitarian purposes. No combat aircraft will be used in this operation," Mr. Clinton has said.

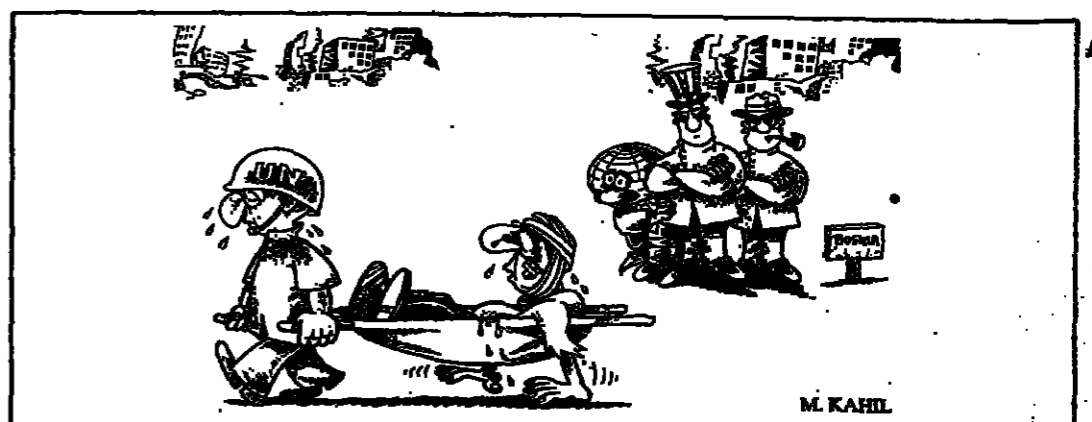
It would be a "great mistake" to read the operation as "some initial foray toward a wider military role," he said during a recent joint press conference with British Prime Minister John Major.

The deliveries, from as high as 3,000 metres to avoid ground fire, were "not a political issue with us" and would help anybody who needs the food and medicine," Mr. Clinton added.

That represented a significant shift in rhetoric about an operation initially cast as a reply to Serb efforts to starve Bosnian Muslims into submission.

In denying any political agenda and carefully lining up allied support, Mr. Clinton was trying to avoid, among other things, enraging Serbian forces, potentially capable of shooting down a U.S. cargo plane and forcing U.S. escalation.

But the Serbs, widely branded by the West as the principal culprits, are not the only ones who could turn Bosnia into a foreign-policy nightmare for the



new administration.

In fact, Serbs seem to fear that desperate Bosnian Muslims might themselves down a U.S. aircraft in hopes Washington would blame the Serbs and enter the conflict to punish them.

Retired army Lieutenant-General Williams Odom, head of National Security Studies at the Private Hudson Institute, said Mr. Clinton's caution could backfire if it led to escalation of ethnic warfare that spilled across European borders.

"The thing gets out of control as you go up the ladder a small rung of a time, Mr. Odom, who headed the U.S. National Security Agency from 1983 to 1988, said in a telephone interview.

If it was in U.S. interests to intervene, Mr. Clinton would do better to go in with 10 NATO divisions, one or two Russian divisions, plus a Ukrainian division, to quell fighting that might otherwise grow to involve Greece, Turkey, Albania and Bulgaria, he said.

A force of that size might have to stay as long as 20 years throughout most of the former

Yugoslavia "while the locals come to terms and create a government that they can live with," Mr. Odom said.

"That's going to the top rung of the ladder," he said, "not screwing around with a few food deliveries."

But Mr. Clinton, who has said he planned to focus "like a laser" on the American economy, may have concluded putting U.S. ground forces into Bosnia held the potential for another Vietnam-style quagmire.

Melvin Goodman, who analysed international issues for the Central Intelligence Agency for 20 years and is now a professor of international relations at the U.S. National War College, said previous presidents had erred by attempting early military adventures before their administrations were acting in harmony.

He cited John Kennedy and the disastrous 1961 Cuban Bay of Pigs invasion, Lyndon Johnson in Vietnam and Gerald Ford and the costly bid to rescue Americans on the freighter Mayaguez off Cambodia in 1975.

"I will give Clinton a certain amount of credit. This is a mistake he's trying to avoid," Mr. Goodman said, adding Mr. Clinton was using "incredible caution" in ordering the high-altitude airlift to avoid shoot-down over Bosnia.

"The only thing you can be sure, from 10,000 feet, is that the supplies will indeed land on earth," he said, citing the comment of a U.S. air force pilot.

Mr. Clinton may also be especially prone to caution because of the timely reminder from Somalia, where a number of Somalis were shot and possibly killed by U.S. troops during riots in Mogadishu in the past weeks.

The violence was the worst since December when then-President George Bush launched the U.S.-led humanitarian effort to quell clan warfare to relief agencies could help starving Somalis.

The flare-up, after two months of relative calm, raised new questions about whether U.S. forces would be able to restore order quickly, as they had planned, and hand over their peace-keeping duties to a U.N. contingent.

مكتبة الامم المتحدة

Syria to convene Arab meeting

(Continued from page 1)

415 Palestinians from the occupied territories. Mr. Christopher is now gambling that Arabs, including the Palestinians, would be ready to return to the talks before all the evictees were returned to their homes.

Mr. Christopher said he had not asked and did not receive an assurance from Mr. Sharaa that Syria would attend the April talks. The assurance he did receive was apparently a more general commitment to work for the resumption of the peace process.

Mr. Christopher said he had been encouraged by the reaction to the decision to issue invitations.

"I continue to feel optimistic. I'm encouraged by developments since yesterday when the announcement was made," he said.

Mr. Christopher said Sharaa had repeated that he attached the highest value to reconvening the peace talks and had said he was pleased the invitations had been issued for April.

Mr. Sharaa said in a newspaper interview published Friday the United States must back implementation of a U.N. resolution urging the return of the evictees.

But he said Syria, a key player in the peace process, had not linked that issue to Syrian participation in the talks.

In his interview with the French newspaper Le Figaro, Mr. Sharaa said Syria would not negotiate with Israel without waiting for a "no foundation" for peace.

"We want a global settlement," Mr. Sharaa said. "If we had wanted a separate peace, we could have done it years ago. If more attention is paid to the Syrian-Israeli negotiations than to the others, that is because there can be no peace without Syria."

"All I can say at the present time is we feel confident enough about the situation to have indicated that we think the next round of these negotiations should commence in April," Mr. Christopher told a joint news conference after meeting Mr. Kozirev.

"We felt there were enough positive signs to have made the statement."

A U.S. official said Mr. Christopher decided to propose the idea to Mr. Kozirev after late night contacts Wednesday with parties to the negotiations.

Mr. Christopher said several of the leaders he met in the Middle East stressed the importance of resuming talks quickly.

"This is a historic moment. I was surprised by the number of countries, the number of leaders, who told me in the Middle East that they think it's one-off opportunity for peace," he said. "And they want to grasp the moment."

"The U.S.-Russian move put intense pressure on Palestinian negotiators to attend the talks even if their demand for the immediate return of the expelled Palestinians was not met."

Adding to the pressure on the Palestinians, President Bill Clinton sent a letter to East Jerusalem leader Faisal Husseini which spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi described as "positive and encouraging."

Mr. Kozirev said Russia would hold talks with Palestinian leaders in Moscow within the next few days to try to persuade them to attend the talks and to fix a specific date.

In occupied Jerusalem, the heads of the Palestinian negotiating team, Haidar Abdul Shafi, said the invitation was premature

because there was still no solution to the evictees problem.

Dr. Abdul Shafi told Israeli army radio that invitations would be "a little premature because the American administration still hasn't responded to the Palestinian requirements."

He indicated Israel had not accepted two key Palestinian demands, for it to repatriate the nearly 400 expellees and to pledge not to expel more Palestinians.

Spokeswoman Ashrawi said they had received two "encouraging" letters each from President Clinton and from Mr. Christopher Thursday, but that their messages fell short of resolving the crisis.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said the expulsion of the 400 Palestinians was an exception to government policy, but the government has not made any statement renouncing the practice of expulsion.

In a speech Thursday, Mr. Rabin defended the practice, even as he gave an upbeat assessment of the peace process.

"We are ready to make compromises for peace. But we are not ready for compromises in the war against terror," he said.

Speaking of prospects for peace, Mr. Rabin said, "It is very likely that this next year will be one of the most fateful and important in the history of the state of Israel" and that the Jewish state would face difficult decisions.

"There is a chance that 45 years of war will come to an end, that perhaps there will be an end to the blood and tears," Mr. Rabin said. "It doesn't only depend on us or our wishes, but we as a government and a state can and will make our contribution."

The Maariv newspaper reported, meanwhile, that Israel offered a compromise to the Palestinians in which it would immediately repatriate up to 30 more of the expellees.

It already offered to bring back 101 now and the rest by the end of the year. But the evictees and the Palestinian delegates insisted all the men be returned immediately and without conditions in line with a U.N. Security Council resolution.

Another newspaper, Hadassot, said Israel also offered to allow back dozens of PLO supporters expelled in past years. Both proposals were reportedly made to Mr. Christopher in his talks in Israel Tuesday and Wednesday.

Mr. Rabin's spokesman Gad Ben Ari declined comment on the reports.

In Tunis, the PLO said that invitations to a new round of peace talks were "premature" but added that it welcomed U.S. proposals to resolve the evictee crisis.

PLO Executive Committee member Yasser Abed Rabbo told Reuters that invitations to resume the talks in April were "premature" and that the Palestinian participation was pending to the commitment to the U.S. proposals and the solution of the deportees issue.

The PLO says Israel has rejected a U.S. plan to speed the return home of the evictees.

"We sent an urgent letter to Warren Christopher on Wednesday night telling him the PLO welcomes these proposals. But when they saw that the Palestinian position was positive, the Israelis came on Thursday morning and asked for amendments which are basically a retraction from all the proposals," Mr. Abed Rabbo said.

Group urges Hamas

(Continued from page 1)

operative as a party during the month of Ramadan, West Bank organisers say.

The Tunis-based DFLP wing agreed to represent FIDA in the PLO Executive Committee, the Palestine Central Council (PCC) and the PNC. While Mr. Abed Rabbo is not the head of the party he will represent the party's interests outside the occupied territories along with other DFLP officials belonging to his branch of the party.

"We, as a group have always chosen the realistic way, the way of cohabitation and mutual recognition," said Friday's statement. "We chose to de-centralise while others were centralising even more than previously," the statement said.

"Our merger with FIDA shows that we are taking the decision-making powers and the lead-

ership back to the occupied territories and will not hold on to it regardless of the consequences," DFLP activist Mamdouh Nofal told the Jordan Times.

The statement made no mention of the other DFLP members in Tunis or their politics. The group called on Israel to immediately return the Palestinian expellees stranded in South Lebanon, and apply U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

"We call on our Arab brothers to coordinate our efforts to accomplish a total Arab-Israeli peace and not a partial, fractured one—a land for peace formula," said the statement.

"The intifada must continue till peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians is achieved and until the occupation of the Palestinian lands ends," it said.

Hamas leaders meet Western envoys

(Continued from page 1)

turned down. But the delegation negotiating on behalf of the Palestinians in the Middle East peace talks is controlled by the PLO.

"Under the circumstances, resumption of the dialogue with the PLO will reflect positively on the peace process," Mr. Abu Sharif said.

Mr. Nazzari said: "Our main goal was to explain our political charter, to make it clear to the Americans that Hamas is not a terrorist group, but a group striving for liberating Palestinian lands from occupation."

'Russia's inheritance of the Soviet Union is illegal'

By Farouq Tobulat

On Oct. 25, 1917, the Bolsheviks carried out a coup; on Oct. 26, 1917, the Petrograd Soviet and the Provisional Revolutionary Committee, in a unilateral decision, without consulting the people inhabiting the Russian empire, formed the Russian government, the Council of Peoples' Commissars.

The resolution of the first Soviet Congress on "federal establishment of the Russian Republic" on Jan. 15, 1918, adopted unilaterally and without consulting national peculiarities and peoples' volition, pointed out that the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) was founded on the basis of a voluntary union of Russians as a federation of ex-Soviet republics, but there is no corresponding agreement or treaty signed by these people's representatives.

On July 1, 1918, the constitution of the Russian Federation was adopted; in it is a constitution that does not take into account the national republics' volition and does not mention who the federation's subjects are and who founded it.

The treaty on forming the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was signed by the Russian Federation on behalf of all the peoples inhabiting the Russian empire.

In June 1990, the RSFSR, adopted the declaration of sovereignty, which proclaimed the superiority of Russia's legislation over the legislation of the USSR. It was the first step on the way of destroying the united state—the USSR.

On Dec. 8, 1991, the leaders of the Russian Federation, the Ukraine and Byelorussia concluded the agreement on forming the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) which announced the abolition of the USSR. Consequently, the USSR stopped existing as a subject of international law and a geopolitical reality, as the treaty points out.

This decision was illegal because, according to the points of the agreement on forming the USSR in 1922, the subjects of the union could only denounce the treaty (i.e. leave the Union), but not abolish it.

On Dec. 21, 1991, the Alma-Ata Summit of the former Soviet

Union heads of republics took place. Eight more republics joined the agreement.

It was decided in Alma-Ata that other republics of the USSR should support Russia as the union's successor. Specifically, they should acknowledge Russia's right to substitute the Soviet Union at the U.N. Security Council. Since some union republics which signed the agreement or joined it were illegal, such as the republics of Moldova, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and others which were formed according to the USSR's laws and did not exist as independent states before, the Alma-Ata meeting violates all legal norms and Russia has no legal grounds for membership in the U.N. and its bodies, especially the Security Council, as the USSR successor state.

Russia and other CIS founders rudely deprived their citizens of USSR citizenship which legally meant an automatic loss of their citizenship because, according to Article 16 of the law on citizenship in the USSR of Dec. 1, 1978, the loss of the USSR citizenship is followed by the loss of a union republic's citizenship.

It follows that any changes of the state system or relations between the parties who had signed the agreement on founding the CIS with other states and international organisations are illegal as are any acts adopted by these states before adopting a national legislation on citizenship.

After changing the legal status of the RSFSR, no referendum or new elections to the supreme bodies of legislation were held, let alone adopting the new constitution.

So the above analysis of the existing documents brings us to the following:

1. Founding the RSFSR as a federative state was illegal because there was neither peoples' volition nor legal documents signed.
2. Russia's inheriting the former USSR's rights and its presence in the U.N. Security Council is illegal.
3. The cancellation of the USSR and foundation of the CIS is illegal.

The writer is head of the Information Bureau and official spokesman of the Chechen Republic in Jordan and in the Middle East.

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Thinker urges Islamic 'cultural revolution'

By Katia Sabat

CAIRO — A new cultural revolution is needed in the Arab countries where Islamic fundamentalism is a growing problem. That is the verdict of Egyptian-born Dr. Rouchdi Fakkar, humanist, sociologist and one of the Arab World's great contemporary thinkers. The best way to combat Islamic extremism is not by sending in the troops, says Dr. Fakkar, but by teaching the people — and especially the younger generation — that the true Islamic religion has nothing to do with violence or terror tactics.

"These young terrorists, these children who are being manipulated, they need to be trained and educated," said Dr. Fakkar. "I would wish for a cultural and educational revolution in all the Muslim countries."

In an interview, he talked of his sadness at the way Islam's real nature has been distorted by religious reactionaries. And he launched a proposal for a campaign to restore the human face of the Islamic faith. "I am proud to be a Muslim. I am proud of Islam, but of an Islam that is reconciliatory and willing to open up to other religions," said Dr. Fakkar. "Islam must find its place once again in our society, as many right-thinking people want it to, but we must begin at the beginning... You can't have Islam without the Muslims."

At the heart of the problem, says the Egyptian sociologist, is an ever-widening gap between the true teachings of the Islamic religion and the distorted version that some sectors have created for their own political ends. "It is sad today that each person has decided to suit his own needs," said Dr. Fakkar. "Some people seem to believe they have the monopoly on the Islamic faith. In fact, Islam is quite simply a ques-

tion of living according to the rules of Islam. A person who steals, tricks, kills and fornicates is living outside the realm of Islam."

The 64-year-old intellectual, one of the most highly regarded minds in the Islamic World, was born in Karnak in southern Egypt. After graduating from the University of Al Azhar, he went on to teach in several major European seats of learning, including the Sorbonne and the University of Geneva. Specialising in pre-Marxist sociology and socialism, Dr. Fakkar's studies also cover social anthropology, cultural relations and psychology. He has worked for UNESCO and published around 50 books, articles and essays. Founder of the Institute of Sociology in Morocco, it is there that he now lives, with his wife and two children.

Dr. Fakkar's views are wide-ranging, and he rejects narrow interpretations of religion and race. For a time, he worked with Georges Gurvitch, a Russian-born Jew and renowned sociologist whom Dr. Fakkar describes as a "genius in his field." "One must be objective," said Dr. Fakkar. "The Jews have made great contributions to progress in all the fields of culture and science. Having said that, let us not forget that there is a category of Jew who is chauvinist and racist, completely closed to the outside world. These are the real enemies, not just to Arabs, but to other Jews and to Judaism in general. One cannot take them as an example by which to judge an entire people."

According to Dr. Fakkar, dialogue is the only real hope for a narrowing of the gap between the Muslim World and the West. "I believe that democracy is slowly making headway almost everywhere in the Arab World, even if it only takes the form of the traditional Islamic consultative councils. The days of the dicta-

torships are over. I believe there is a hope that the type of dialogue I propose will soon be a reality."

In the face of a certain mistrust for the word democracy on the part of some Islamicists, Dr. Fakkar recommends a reworking of the terminology. "We must try to create a bridge, a kind of beach-head of understanding between the western terminology and the terminology of the Arab and Muslim civilisation," he said. Recent scenes of terrorist violence in Egypt, which have seen young adolescents attacking busloads of foreign tourists, are the product of a complex cocktail of factors, says the sociologist. "It is a mistake to try to give just one single explanation of these events," he said. "On the contrary, there are so many contributing factors that it is not easy to bring them all together and to analyse them... That is why, as a sociologist, I hope that repression will be used only as a last resort, when all the other methods have failed, when dialogue has become impossible and when there is no longer any room for negotiation."

The cultural revolution which Dr. Fakkar so strongly advocates should be entrusted to an international group of independent Islamic thinkers, he explained. "Governments cannot and should not play the leading role in every field. A government cannot be responsible for every aspect — economic, social, political and religious matters as well. Why not redistribute the responsibilities? The Islamic thinkers should take responsibility for an area of work which belongs to them," he said. "Iran is trying to usurp, this role, and that is our fault. We have rather neglected the spiritual and cultural aspect of our religion."

In answer to critics who have levelled accusations of authoritarian rule against the Moroccan government, the Egyptian sociologist repeats his warnings of the danger of trying to force western values and interpretations on the Islamic World. "One should not confuse democracy in Europe — where public opinion is already well informed — with what the governments of other countries may be capable of achieving and want to achieve," said Dr. Fakkar. "We have seen where democracies have led people who were not yet ready to take on this kind of freedom. One need look no further than Algeria. Every people should be governed according to a formula which corresponds to its cultural level, its customs and traditions, and to its degree of openness to the outside world. It is a grave mistake to suggest that there is just one type of democracy in this world" — World News Link.

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WHEN I WAS TWENTY I FOUND OUT THAT IF I MADE UP MY MIND TO DO SOMETHING I COULD DO IT!

SO I MADE UP MY MIND THAT IN TEN YEARS I WAS GONNA BE RICH!

BUT YOU'RE NOT RICH!

NO ---- I FOUND OUT THAT IT WAS EASIER TO CHANGE MY MIND--

?

SO I IT TO GONNA BE RICH!

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48 Born — (stylish society)
50 Vard tool
53 Concom phrase
55 Pedestal part
59 Track meet
60 Eventual
62 Smallest of the fiber
63 Bowl
64 "In...
 Wanderland"
65 Type of arch
67 Horse blanket

DOWN

1 Hook
2 Feet pain
3 Put away
4 Experiment
5 Commotion
6 Sulk
7 Man
8 Contract
9 Help!

10 Layers
11 Cargo
12 Division word
13 "The grass is greener"
14 Catch
15 "She blows!"
16 "The public"
17 Off (toss)
18 Beyond
19 Plant insect
20 Crawl
21 Of...
 speech
22 Breath
23 Expunge
24 "I" phrase
25 Anchor for a nail
26 French singer
28 Kilt of old
30 Impertinent
31 Pair of males
40 Flew in
41 "Her
42 Feet
43 Invent
44 Living
 horse
46 Recorded

50 Spanish river
51 Medicine
52 Depraved
53 Govt. agents
54 "The Pelts"
56 Not "a"

57 Tube
58 Bank status
59 "Lord..."
61 Amateur reader

Saudi banks report a lucrative 1992

fits this year, but they believe profits will rise in most cases nonetheless.

The continued decline in interest rates so far this year has translated into more capital gains for some — though this may be counteracted in the rest of the year by lower returns for their investments once the decline stops.

A potential storm cloud on the horizon is if Iraq returns to the oil market, forcing Saudi Arabia to scale back from its current eight million barrels per day of crude production.

spending the economy and the banks will feel it.

Arabia is simply a very wealthy country. One economist estimates the average disposable income per Saudi family to be \$147,000 — all tax-free.

"I'm bullish on 1993," an economist said.

Applaud the plan

now because of the vast accumulated debt," Mr. Clinton said.

Lane Kirkland, president of the AFL-CIO union umbrella organization said the Clinton plan "sets the country on the right course for the future," adding the economy stimulus plan would provide necessary jobs.

Mr. Clinton insisted his plan would build long-term economic recovery, aided by reductions in long-term interest rates.

And in a reference to critics of his short-term stimulus programme, which would spend about \$30 billion, Mr. Clinton said he would not abandon it.

"I think the stimulus is important, and I will continue to support it," Mr. Clinton said. According to the stimulus law, now being

senated 10, after Congress enacts spending cuts and tax increases.

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Yeltsin urged to take offensive against conservative parliament

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin came under growing pressure from allies Friday to take the offensive against Russia's conservative parliament as a deadline for a power-sharing deal with the legislature passed.

The editor of one major liberal newspaper said Mr. Yeltsin should press for elections to break the deadlock.

"Yeltsin, in whom we invested such hopes, is not in control of events. We see no understanding for the state of affairs and no considered strategy," Vitaly Tretyakov, chief editor of Nezavisimaya Gazeta newspaper, wrote in a commentary.

At Kremlin talks on Feb. 16, Mr. Yeltsin and parliamentary chief Ruslan Khasbulatov formed a commission to draft a constitutional settlement within 10 days. Mr. Yeltsin said if the commission succeeded, he was ready to drop the referendum idea.

Since then, there has been no progress and parliament has snubbed Mr. Yeltsin's proposals. First Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Shumeiko was quoted by ITAR-TASS News Agency as saying Mr. Yeltsin must go ahead with a planned constitutional referendum if parliament and presidentialism failed to reach an agreement.

"All power in the country has passed into the hands of the Congress of People's Deputies (the supreme legislature)," Mr. Shumeiko said. "I no longer believe a compromise is possible with parliamentary deputies."

Close aide to Mr. Yeltsin and media chief Mikhail Poltoranin said there was no doubt the referendum would go ahead and

described it as the last chance of a peaceful settlement.

"The legislature cannot ride like a steamroller over Russian statehood," he said.

Critics, including Mr. Khasbulatov, insist the referendum, far from sorting out the division of power between the Congress and the president, would only fan political conflict in Russia.

A presidential spokesman said Friday the passing of the deadline did not mean the end of all hopes for compromise.

"The important thing is that working contacts take place every day. We'll see what comes, but the talks are hard."

Mr. Khasbulatov, a man with little popular support but strong influence in provincial power structures, has curbed Mr. Yeltsin's executive powers to the point where one presidential aide compared him recently with Britain's Queen Elizabeth.

The comment was exaggerated, but Mr. Yeltsin faces serious problems in resisting attempts by central and regional legislatures to claw back powers to stop his radical reforms laying waste to Russia.

Mr. Yeltsin was directly elected to the newly-created presidency in June 1991 without clearly-defined executive powers. Russia has failed so far to adopt a post-Communist constitution setting out the roles of legislature, executive and judiciary.

The legislature firmly controls the budget, the Central Bank, the appointment of several key security ministries and administers state property through parliamentary agencies.

Congress could extend its power

as the supreme organ of state power at the next session by voting to make government subordinate directly to parliament, which was elected in 1990.

It could also vote to call off the April referendum, even if no powersharing agreement is reached by the commission.

The smaller standing parliament meets next week to set a date for the Congress, which is expected to meet in early March.

Mr. Tretyakov, editor of Nezavisimaya Gazeta newspaper, suggested a series of possible outcomes of the present struggle, including an effective coup by either of the two sides.

The most likely outcome, however, was a continuation of the present struggle, leaving a weakened and divided administration, unable to cope with a serious crisis such as hyperinflation.

He called for fresh elections in April of May.

"The current president would have a good chance of winning. His charisma has far from faded completely. Ruslan Khasbulatov, if anyone is afraid of him, has no chance."

Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev said in an article published Friday that he was worried by a tendency in the West to isolate his country and warned that this would strengthen the hand of nationalists.

"I am worried by how quickly a school of thought has sprung up in the West which maintains that it is better to have dealings with a weakened Russia, left alone with its troubles," he wrote in the NATO Review, an official

alliance publication.

"This selling short of a power which is historically destined to be great is not only unrealistic but dangerous, because it kindles nationalist and confrontational attitudes both in Russia and throughout the world," Mr. Kozyrev wrote.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin and his reformers are locked in a battle for power with the country's parliament, a struggle which the West is worried could bring an end to reforms.

Mr. Kozyrev appealed for closer ties with NATO and cooperation through institutions like the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) to keep nationalism under control.

"If...we began to be seen in Western capitals as something 'unnecessary' or 'dangerous', this would only encourage our 'national patriots' to increase their attacks on current Russian policy and would sustain their chauvinist desires to close off Russia," Mr. Kozyrev wrote.

Mr. Kozyrev shocked the world last December when he gave a speech at a European security conference that appeared to portray a new headline Russian foreign policy.

He later withdrew the remarks, saying that he wanted to show what could happen if the forces of reform failed.

"This course of events, which would certainly not be in our common interests, must not be allowed to come about and the strategy of partnership (with the West) must serve to guarantee this," Mr. Kozyrev wrote in the article.



SOUP KITCHEN: Bosnians line up at a soup kitchen in the centre of Sarajevo. U.S. President Bill Clinton proposed a food airlift into Bosnia. Herzegovina with control of the operation retained by the United Nations (AFP photo)

N. Korea rejects new IAEA demands

VIENNA (R) — North Korea Friday rejected fresh demands by the United Nations nuclear watchdog to open up two of its military sites for inspection, branding the move a serious violation of its sovereignty.

North Korean delegates who attended talks with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) board of governors in Vienna said the body was openly siding with Pyongyang's adversaries and was in danger of losing its impartiality.

"That is why our country is being forced...to adopt self-defensive measures to safeguard our sovereignty," the North Korean delegation said in a statement.

The statement did not specify what measures Pyongyang would take.

The IAEA board of governors, which includes representatives from 35 member states, Thursday gave North Korea one month to comply with its demands to allow inspectors to visit two sites at Yongbyon believed to be secret nuclear installations.

The IAEA resolution said the board would meet again no later than March 25 to consider North Korea's response. If Pyongyang still refused, the board would consider what it called "further measures."

"Our country will in no way accept this resolution which demands special inspections of two military sites which have nothing to do with nuclear activities," the North Korean delegates said.

North Korea, a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, also agreed last year to sign a "safeguards agreement" which permits inspectors to ensure nuclear equipment and materials are used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

"The adoption of this unjust resolution is a flagrant violation of our country's sovereignty and creates serious difficulties in complying with the safeguards agreement," they added.

Kim names academics to Seoul cabinet

SEOUL (Agencies) — South Korean President Kim Young-Sam named a completely new cabinet Friday, appointing academics to head his foreign and unification policy teams and pragmatists to tackle economic ills.

Sworn in Thursday as the first civilian head of state for more than three decades, Mr. Kim retained no incumbent ministers in his 24-member cabinet.

"President Kim has worked hard to find new and reform-oriented figures who can faithfully carry out his pledges to build a new Korea," a spokesman for Mr. Kim said.

Han Sung-Joo, political science professor at Korea University, will replace Lee Sang-Ok as foreign minister and Han Wan-Sang, professor of political science at Seoul National University, will take over from Choi Young-Choul as unification minister.

Political change in policy towards North Korea, adding that the new unification minister was an advocate of a more flexible and open-minded attitude towards the isolated Communist state.

Mr. Kim, 65, predicted Thursday unification of Korea before the end of the century and offered to meet North Korea's ageing Stalinist leader Kim Il-Sung, to plot a course towards reconciliation.

Relations between the two Koreas have frozen over a bitter dispute over the North's suspected development of nuclear weapons.

In a break with the past, Mr. Kim and Prime Minister Hwang In-Sung, who was named Monday, also picked an academic to head the powerful internal security agency, a post that normally went to an army general.

Kim Deok, dean of Hankook University for Foreign Studies, will replace ex-General Lee Hyun-Woo as the head of the Agency for National Security Planning (NSP), long accused of torturing political dissidents and fabricating Communist charges.

President Kim appointed a record number of three women to cabinet posts Friday to show his commitment to his campaign pledge to stress women's rights.

"We hope the appointment of three women ministers will contribute to boosting women's rights," said Kim Kyung O, leader of the National Federation of Women's Groups.

In the past, one woman has usually been appointed to the 24-member cabinet, as the second state minister for political affairs, specialising in issues pertaining to women, children and the elderly.

Mr. Kim appointed a woman again to that post. Kwon Young Ja, 56, Ms. Kwon currently serves as head of the government supported Korean Women's Development Institute and was formerly an outspoken journalist, active in women's social welfare issues.

But Mr. Kim's selection of two other women to the cabinet came as a surprise.

Hwang San-Sung, 49, a lawyer, television commentator and former judge, was named minister of the environment. She has been an advocate of the equal rights movement in Korea.

Park Yang-Sil, 58, an obstetrician, was named minister for health and social affairs.

Dr. Park has led a movement to help Vietnamese children fathered by South Korean soldiers during the war in Indochina. She also has been active in anti-nuclear and equal rights movements as the head of the Association of Korean Women Doctors.

Haitian bishop beaten after mass

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (R) — A prominent Haitian bishop was beaten and kicked Thursday after a funeral mass for victims of a ferry boat disaster turned into the largest demonstration for President Jean-Bertrand Aristide since his overthrow in a bloody 1991 coup.

"Had we not been there, Bishop (Willy) Romeus might have been killed," said Michael Moller, coordinator of a joint U.N.-Organisation of American States mission that arrived in Haiti 11 days ago to monitor human rights.

Bishop Romeus, a critic of the military-backed government, was thrown to the ground, pummelled and kicked when he left the Port-Au-Prince cathedral after delivering the eulogy. An aide to the bishop said some of the assailants were armed.

Bishop Romeus's glasses were broken, his purple clerical sash ripped and he was repeatedly punched in the face, according to a diplomat who witnessed the beating.

Diplomats and members of the U.N. team jumped between the churchman and his attackers, and diplomats whisked him off in a limousine, first to an unidentified embassy and then to a house used to shelter church figures.

German Reichstag fire still controversial 60 years later

BONN (R) — Sixty years on, historians still argue over who started the fire that gutted Germany's Reichstag parliament building and gave the Nazis the pretext to crack down on opponents.

The fire destroyed the plenary hall on Feb. 27, 1933 — barely a month after Adolf Hitler came to power.

Dutch Communist Marinus Van Der Lubbe, detained in the burning building, was blamed for the blaze.

"Even today it is being disputed whether the fire was an act of a loner or if it was staged by the Nazis," the weekly Die Woche wrote in one of several re-examinations of the incident.

The Reichstag, built 100 years ago by Otto Von Bismarck, Germany's first chancellor, is in the limelight again after German unification in 1990.

The neo-classical building, bombed during World War II, was just on the western side of the Communist wall that cut Berlin in two, for almost three decades.

With Berlin restored as capital of Germany, the Bonn parliament will move into the Reichstag within 10 years and an architect's contest for its renovation is drawing to a close.

be, who told police he set the Reichstag ablaze to make workers "fight for freedom", was found guilty of arson and guillotined 11 months after the fire.

Most historians today believe he acted alone, although Hitler's court suggested he had unknown Communist partners.

But some insist the fire was the work of the Nazis, who needed a provocation to pass the enabling act, which wiped out democratic rights and led to the first roundup of political opponents for the concentration camps.

Walther Hofer, retired director of the University of Bern's Institute of History, said the arrest of thousands of opponents within hours of the fire indicated careful planning.

Mr. Hofer, co-publisher of a book about the fire, said the fact the court had to acquit four Communist co-defendants because they had perfect alibis showed the Nazis made up the charges.

He said technical investigations in 1970 had shown one man could not possibly have ignited the wood-paneled plenary hall in the limited time Van Der Lubbe had.

"It would have been impossible to turn a plenary hall of 11,000 cubic metres into a flaming sea within a few minutes with the equipment at hand," he told Die Woche.

U.S. historian William Shirer, author of The Rise and Fall of The Third Reich, believed the Nazis had learned of Van Der Lubbe's arson plans from his barroom boasting about his revolutionary exploits and doosed the plenary hall in advance to ensure it was completely destroyed.

"The coincidence that the Nazis had found a demented Communist arsonist who was out to do exactly what they themselves had determined to do seems incredible but is nevertheless supported by the evidence," he wrote.

Court records quote Van Der Lubbe as saying he ignited the fire with matches and charcoal fire starters but neither the Nazis nor their opponents supported this notion.

"The Communists were convinced the Nazis had set the fire," German historian Fritz Tobias, who believes Van Der Lubbe acted alone, told Die Woche.

"Experience shows that lone perpetrators in sensational attacks are always regarded with suspicion," he said. "People find it hard to accept that a man without a name is capable of interfering with big politics at his own initiative and changing the course of history."

COLUMN 8

Madonna pictures bring slap on wrist

TOKYO (R) — A Japanese firm got off with a light fine Friday for defying local obscenity laws by not retouching nude pictures in Madonna's book Sex. Tokyo customs officials ordered Toppaan Printing Co Ltd to pay a fine of almost 100,000 yen (\$850) for skirting Japanese censors and printing the original photographs in the Japanese-language version of the book. The local edition of Madonna's coffee-table shocker, complete with a CD, retails for 6,000 yen (\$50). The first batch of 150,000 copies sold out last Dec. 1 when it reached Japanese bookstores. "We accept the decision and promise to be more careful in the future," a Toppaan Company official said. Toppaan imported negatives of the sexually explicit, sado-masochistic photographs that fill Sex without filing a required report to customs authorities. In October, customs officials at Tokyo's Narita Airport held up imports of the American edition of Sex to allow government censors to scratch out all glimpses of pubic hair. Japan's bizarre censorship laws prohibit pictures showing pubic hair and genitalia but place no restraints on graphic scenes of sexual violence, including child rape and bestiality. Over the past year, authorities have begun to bow to demands from publishers and artists to permit the depiction of pubic hair, particularly when it affects artistic expression.

Number of Japan gangsters falls after new curbs

TOKYO (R) — Total membership of Japan's crime syndicates fell slightly last year after tough new curbs on their activities, the national police agency said. The number of "yakuza" gangsters fell by 7,200 to 56,600 at the end of last year, an agency spokesman said. The anti-organized crime law, passed last March, gave police new powers to crack down on activities such as extortion. Police previously lacked the power to rein in gangsters without evidence that they had used violence to intimidate victims. Gang leaders have challenged the new law in police hearings, arguing that their groups are traditional, organisations dating back hundreds of years. The spokesman said membership of the three largest syndicates increased slightly at the expense of smaller groups last year.

Canada reinstates Victoria Cross for heroism

OTTAWA (R) — Canada will reinstate the Victoria Cross as its highest military decoration, ending a long campaign by Canadian soldiers and veterans of two world wars, the prime minister's office said. The Victoria Cross, awarded for exceptional heroism, was first instituted by Queen Victoria during the Crimean War over a century ago. Ninety-three Canadians received the V.C., the last one awarded posthumously to pilot Robert Gray for an attack on a Japanese destroyer in the last days of the World War II. But Canada dropped the medal in 1972 when it created its own military bravery medals as a further step by the former colony to cut links with Britain. The Canadian Victoria Cross, which has been approved by Queen Elizabeth II, will be awarded for "conspicuous bravery...in the presence of the enemy" and Canadian troops serving as United Nations peacekeepers will be eligible. The campaign to get the medal reinstated was boosted by support from Major-General Lewis MacKenzie, Canada's best-known soldier. He led Canadian peacekeepers who secured Sarajevo Airport last year.

Girl can 'divorce' mother — U.K. court

LEEDS, England (R) — A 12-year-old girl who sought to "divorce" her mother may stay with her foster family, an English High Court judge has ruled. Lawyers said the girl, who cannot be named, could be the youngest child in Britain to make use of a law passed in 1989 allowing her to seek another home. The case attracted attention last year when the girl, then aged 11, tried to legally "divorce" her mother. Proceedings were later dropped when lawyers agreed that local authorities should take over the case. On Tuesday, a High Court judge in the northern English town of Leeds ruled the girl could stay with foster parents who had taken care of her from the age of three months until she returned to her mother at the age of eight.

PAC to take tough line in talks with Pretoria

JOHANNESBURG (R) — The radical black Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) said Friday it would never accede to government demands that its armed wing suspend the struggle against white rule in South Africa.

"The government wants APLA to go on a 'holiday', that is not going to happen," said PAC Western Cape official Ando Ntsodo, referring to what he said was the first item on the government's agenda at forthcoming talks with the black radical group.

Monday's discussions, in the Botswana capital Gaborone, are the first since President F.W. de Klerk called off talks with the PAC after its military wing, the Azanian People's Liberation Army, killed several whites in attacks late last year.

Asked to comment on Mr. Ntsodo's remarks, Law and Order Ministry spokesman Craig Kotze described the Gaborone discussions as a bid by the government to get rid of obstacles to planned multi-party talks leading to South Africa's first non-racial elections.

Stressing he did not want to pre-empt the meeting, Mr. Kotze refused to say whether the government was hopeful of a breakthrough.

U.S. prosecutor: Police delayed taking King for treatment

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Two policemen taking an injured Robby King from one hospital to another detained for nearly two hours, stopping at their station to show the beating victim to colleagues, a prosecutor said.

In an opening statement in a crowded courtroom, Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven Clymer also accused the two defendants of trying to convince medical personnel at both hospitals that Mr. King was under the influence of the hallucinogen PCP when there was no such evidence.

The surprise allegations about officers Laurence Powell and Timothy Wind came as the federal government launched its effort to do what state prosecutors could not — win convictions in the videotaped beating of the black motorist.

The defence began its opening statements with the same strategy that proved successful before, portraying the officers' actions as appropriate and within police department guidelines.

"The conduct that was engaged in was not illegal, but was directly in response to the conduct of Mr. King," said Ira Salzman, attorney for Sgt. Stacey Koon.

Mr. Powell's lawyer, Michael Stone, stressed that the officers believed Mr. King, a large man, was "a duster," or a person on PCP.

"You will hear that King had the classic symptoms of a duster," he told jurors, saying the motorist was "bathed in sweat," glassy eyed and seemed to have "superhuman strength."

He also disclosed that the defence will call three witnesses who testified for the prosecution in the earlier trial: "California Highway Patrol officers Melaine and Tim Singer and Mr. King's passenger, Bryant

Allen, who said Mr. King's behaviour that night scared him. The acquittals of Mr. Powell, Mr. Wind, Sgt. Koon and another white officer on most state charges ignited three days of deadly mayhem in Los Angeles, and the federal trial has had an undertone of racial tension since jury selection began.

The multifacial jury listened reply, sometimes leaning forward in their seats, as Mr. Clymer outlined the case and played for them a newly enhanced version of the videotape shot by an amateur cameraman.

Mr. Clymer said he would prove that Mr. Powell and Mr. Wind, along with officer Theodore Briseno and their supervisor, Sgt. Koon, violated Mr. King's civil rights. He said the three officers brutally clubbed, kicked and stomped the black motorist who "was not a threat," and Sgt. Koon did nothing to stop it.

Mr. Briseno's lawyer minimised his client's role in the beating, saying a scene in which prosecutors say Mr. Briseno stomped on Mr. King's neck with heavy boots was just a gentle effort to keep Mr. King from rising and drawing more baton blows.

Attorney Harland Braun also told the jury that Mr. Briseno's boots only looked heavy. Holding up a boot, he said, "It's very thin. It's almost like a ballet slipper. It wasn't used as a defensive weapon."

It was clear that Mr. Briseno will not testify against his codefendants as he did in the state trial, and Mr. Braun said a scene in which Mr. Briseno reaches out to stop Mr. Powell's baton merely shows "a remarkable disagreement between two officers."

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Troops desert at Russian launch site

MOSCOW (R) — About 20 Russian soldiers at the Baikonur space centre in Kazakhstan deserted last week in protest over working conditions at the launch-site for Russia's giant proton rocket, ITAR-TASS News Agency said Friday. The incident came a year after construction units at Baikonur mutinied over living conditions, burning down buildings and ransacking stores. Four people were killed in the riots. TASS quoted the local newspaper Express-K as saying the deserters, who complained they were being forced to work too hard to make up for undermanning, drove off in a stolen truck. A spokesman for the Russian army's space forces said the soldiers had been detained, but he gave no details of the incident.

Tank explodes, policeman shot in England

WARRINGTON, England (R) — Police called in anti-terrorist units and launched a manhunt Friday after a policeman was shot, a car hijacked and a gas storage tank blown up in a series of violent incidents in northern England. The cause of the blast was not known but a spokesman for British gas said it was possible an explosive device had been used. Police in Warrington, near Manchester, were trying to determine if the incidents were related. They said they were working with Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist unit, but declined to say whether they suspected the Irish Republican Army, which is fighting to oust Britain from Northern Ireland. "You can draw your own conclusions," said one police official. The IRA has launched a series of bomb attacks in British cities, including Manchester, in recent months. Police said they were searching for an armed man who hijacked a car and was believed to have helped two others shoot and injure a policeman when he stopped a van near Warrington town centre about midnight. The three men escaped.

U.S. police raid suicide doctor's home

ROYAL OAK, Michigan (R) — Three hours after Michigan Governor John Engler signed a law making assisted suicide a felony, police armed with search warrants raided the home of suicide doctor Jack Kevorkian and that of a friend who helped him. A spokesman for the Royal Oak Police Department declined to comment on why investigators were searching Dr. Kevorkian's home. Local television reports said, however, police were looking for evidence that one of Dr. Kevorkian's 15 suicides changed his mind minutes before the retired pathologist, dubbed "Dr. Death," helped him take his life. Police were also searching the home of Dr. Kevorkian's friend in Waterford township, where former security guard Hugh Gale took his life earlier this month with Dr. Kevorkian's help. A spokeswoman for an anti-euthanasia group called the Advocates for Life Ministries, however, said the organisation has evidence proving Mr. Gale did not want to commit suicide.

Khmer Rouge steal more U.N. vehicles

PHNOM PENH (AP) — The Khmer Rouge stole two U.N. vehicles and two radios from four U.N. personnel at gunpoint, after luring them into guerrilla territory for a prearranged meeting, a U.N. spokesman said Friday. Thursday's theft was the second Khmer Rouge guerrilla raid in less than a week. U.N. officials said Tuesday that the Khmer Rouge hit an American U.N. peacekeeper while stealing his vehicle in the central province of Kompong Thom last weekend. "There is a disturbing pattern in all these incidents," spokesman Eric Fakh said. "It is unacceptable that anybody, let alone a faction that signed the Paris peace accords, would shamelessly exert undue pressure on U.N. personnel through armed threats." Khmer Rouge official Meas Chey said he knew nothing about the incident.

All official candidates elected in Cuba polls

HAVANA (R) — All 589 official candidates, including President Fidel Castro, were elected to form Cuba's next National Assembly in Wednesday's one-party general elections on the island, the National Electoral Commission said Thursday. While the polls were the first direct national elections on the Caribbean island in more than 30 years of Communist rule, they had offered no opposition or alternative choices to the ruling Communist Party and official candidate lists. Smooth election of the 589 parliamentary candidates had been widely expected following an intense official propaganda campaign by the Communist authorities calling on voters to massively back official candidate lists. The U.S. State Department said Thursday Cuba's parliamentary elections were neither free nor fair. "Regrettably, yesterday's elections were not an exercise in democracy," the department said in a statement. "True free and fair elections have never been held under Cuba's current government." Asked about a statement by Cuban President Fidel Castro that he might step down in a few years, State Department spokesman Joseph Synder said, "We think Cuba would be served better by another leader than Fidel Castro."